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ABSTRACT

Several uses for videotape recordings in teacher training have evolved. They can be used for classroom demonstration of a methodology, approach, or technique, or for preserving and re-using a particularly good lecture by an effective speaker. Microteaching sessions or simulations can be recorded and critiqued or evaluated by the student himself. Teachers can tailor instructional materials to their classes and purposes, which can be especially effective in English for special purposes. Authentic prerecorded instructional materials are also becoming more readily available. Videotaping can also be useful for classroom research and observation. Teachers and teacher trainees can find creative uses for this technology, and should not bypass or undervalue the potential of basic video use in favor of more advanced technology. (MSE)

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VIDEO IN SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING

Pearl Goodman[1]

Five major roles for video in second language teacher training are described: (1) demonstrations; (2) lectures; (3) development of teaching materials; (4) micro-teaching; and (5) classroom research. Students in teacher methodology curricula who have been exposed to the possibilities for the medium have found creative uses for video in their own classroom teaching.

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Pragmatism rather than prescribed theory has guided the growth of video use in the training of ESL teachers at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Beginning with the widely accepted use of video for micro-teaching in our practicum, we have moved over the years to ever wider and more interesting uses. Only recently have we become fully aware of how extensive these are.

Reality caught up with us not too long ago when we undertook to catalogue 12 years' worth of video tapes that had been made--or more correctly--produced. As we confronted the task, we were far from prepared for the diversity and variety that we faced. Our library was considerable, ranging from lectures and methodology demonstrations to classroom teaching materials and research. As we dealt with the problem of sorting out what had been acquired and developed, it became apparent that video had indeed fulfilled its original teaching promise and then some. In the early days when television cameras were not so "user friendly" and always required a flood-lighted studio and at least two technicians, it often appeared that educators had acquired an enormous white elephant. However, it is now clear that with simplified technology (portable machines that any teacher can operate) and a backlog of classroom experience, educators can now seriously think about video's full educational potential and begin to train all our teachers in its intelligent use.

In teacher training it has evolved that there are several roles for video to play, and these seem to fall into five main categories: (1) demonstrations, (2) lectures, (3) teaching materials, (4) micro-teaching, and (5) classroom research. It is important to exploit all of these in teacher training. In my own teacher training course, I have used video for all of the categories listed above. While I have not given specific assignments in categories (1), (2), and (5), I have found that my students, having been exposed to these uses of video in the practicum, have in their own classes become users of video for these same purposes. It seems that the habit of using video in these ways has been "caught" even if not explicitly "taught". Categories (3) and (4) are explicitly taught in the practicum, but only because it is more traditional to do so. However, it seems to me that it is entirely appropriate for us not only to teach all these categories explicitly but to turn a critical and thoughtful eye on the best and most important things we have learned about all of these categories and to teach them to our teachers. It is also entirely appropriate for us to use the research and practices of related fields to help us expand our insights and consciousness about why some things work well and others do not.

Since each of the categories listed above raises its own special issues and considerations, I should like to discuss each one separately and in the order in which I have used them in my own practicum class. However, before doing this, I should probably describe briefly the organization of the ESL Practicum here at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to help the reader understand how various activities described fit into a meaningful context.

FL 016382

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Initially the practicum was set up to provide a micro-teaching experience for M.A. candidates in Teaching English as a Second Language. Selected writing and teaching assignments in grammar and pronunciation were made after appropriate demonstrations with a class of 12 to 15 beginning-level (not zero level) English-language learners, participants in a Special English Program (SEP), organized for this purpose each semester. However, the teaching assignments are no longer limited to micro-teaching. Now, using two textbooks, one grammar-based and one function-based, the student teachers actually conduct the class which meets 10 hours a week. They also write some of their own teaching materials for dictation, listening, grammar, and pronunciation. In addition, they write the course tests. Aside from teaching and participating in interaction activities with the SEP class, they observe the class being taught in 15 different demonstration lessons, ranging from reading and writing to communication activities. They also attend a two-hour-a-week seminar consisting of lectures and workshops.

It is my hope that this description will help the reader better understand how the five categories of video use to be discussed in this paper have evolved as an integral part of our practicum. As indicated earlier, these categories will be discussed in the order in which they have been introduced in our practicum.

VIDEO IN DEMONSTRATIONS

Most language teacher training courses are not as fortunate as we are here in ESL at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. We have a specially created class of language learners in which we can demonstrate live any teaching technique or methodology we choose. Even so we have had a number of demonstration video tapes made over the years. Some methodologies, like the Silent Way and Community Language Learning, are best shown by teachers who have received training at the centers where these methodologies have been developed. Hence, whenever possible, we have tried to tape the most expert demonstration of a methodology, approach, or technique that has been available to us. Not only does interspersing these taped demonstrations with live ones provide variety in expertise and message, but it also provides variety in medium, all of which makes for a richer and more fully rounded course.

In cases where a live demonstration class is not part of the teacher training program, I think that demonstration tapes would be essential. Teaching is an art as well as a methodology for imparting knowledge, and in art we must know what something "looks like", or "sounds like" and at best what it "feels like". Video tapes can at least convey what a lesson "looks like" and "sounds like", if not what it "feels like".

VIDEO AND LECTURES

Often in imparting information, the lecturer may be at least as important, or possibly more important, than the material itself. It is certainly the case that if the lecturer is closely identified with an idea, a theory or a methodology, this identification provides an important dimension for involving the viewer or listener. It is now generally understood that TV is a medium which depends on the power of the personality of the performer, and this aspect of video should be explored and exploited in the presentation of ideas. For example, in the field of language learning the name of Professor Sandra Savignon, who is a Professor of French at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, is nationally known and closely associated with communicative competence, and I have always found that it is far more effective to have her speak on this subject than for me to present it, even though I am at this point very familiar with the basic tenets of the communicative approach. In short, her star quality imparts the message more powerfully. Video makes it possible for every teacher who has access to such "stars" to build a valuable arsenal of teaching aids. I don't think just any lecturer will do. S/he must either have the "star quality" of which I have spoken or be a gifted lecturer (or both). I think much damage has been done to the idea of lectures on video for classroom use by simply being guided by the topic or subject. The dismal performance of mediocre lecturers on video has been an all-round discouraging experience. However, if we will face what commercial TV knows--which

is that this is a "performer's medium"--we will make fewer mistakes in our selection and production of video lectures. It is time now to develop some guidelines to help teachers use the medium more intelligently for this purpose.

VIDEO USE IN MICRO-TEACHING

Here at the University of Illinois in ESL our teacher tapings are not really "micro" anymore but a whole hour's lesson. We tape teachers only after they have been teaching for awhile. After the teacher-trainee has taught the special English class for about half of the semester s/he writes an hour long grammar lesson which s/he is then taped teaching. We have found that it is counter-productive for teachers to see themselves appearing inexperienced and incompetent. They view themselves alone after I have critiqued them immediately following their live performance. They are given a list of things to look for in themselves and in the lesson they have written. After half a semester's work they have a sense of what they ought to be doing. Armed with a questionnaire and as much time as they care to spend watching themselves (some watch their own tapes two or three times), teacher-trainees can be more thoughtful and reflective in their comments and their observations. Also, writing down their observations leads to a more honest and accurate self-assessment. They are also asked to write a general self-evaluation of their preparation as well as their performance. Self-evaluation is one of the most important aspects of a teacher's preparation. Without having developed a sense of critical self-awareness, a teacher is not prepared to work toward his or her own continuing education, growth, and development. Video is, if properly used, a wonderful instrument for accomplishing this. However, micro-teaching is an insufficient technique. It does not permit student teachers to see themselves on a large enough canvas. It does not capture the sweep or spirit of a whole lesson. With video it is always marvelously possible to isolate any segment or exercise and analyze it. Microanalysis is possible at any time. Therefore, it cheats student teachers not to see themselves moving around in the larger field of an hour-long lesson, seeing themselves functioning in a normal teaching span and learning that in teaching the whole is far greater than the sum of its parts.

Before leaving this topic, I would like to add briefly that almost everything teachers learn from observing their performance on video tape can be applied to having ESL learners observing themselves performing in English or video. It is, however, as important for the language learner as for the student teacher to be guided in what to look for in the video tape. Appropriate questionnaires should be developed.

VIDEO-BASED TEACHING MATERIALS

Probably the most important role for video that has evolved in ESL teacher training has been in the area of teaching materials development. It is here that teacher trainers have been the most neglectful, and it is in this area that there is the greatest potential for the teacher--especially for teacher-created or -developed materials.

The British have for some time now had quality ESL lessons available on video, and recently they have collaborated in some successful commercial ventures adapted to American English. There have also been some American materials in the area of listening comprehension available, and recently there has been a spate of American commercial ESL video materials advertised. However technically smooth and professional these materials might be, they do not and cannot come close to realizing the full creative and interactive potential of video. To be sure they are very useful and helpful in overseas situations where "beyond the classroom" experiences are not available and where non-native English teachers might want some native English speaker models. However, as the idea of "Englishes" and "varieties of English" in the world grows, the less bound non-native English teachers will be to these "native" models and the freer they will feel to use video materials of their own creation.

The new video technology makes it possible for language teachers to consider all manner of tailor-made video materials for their classes, and in these days of ESP (English for Special Purposes) the need for tailoring can prove to be considerable.

As increasingly more authentic material is used in teaching listening skills, more TV programming (advertisements, speeches, rock videos, movies, travelogues, science productions, etc.) will be edited and adapted for classroom use. Just as many ESL reading texts now reprint commercial magazine articles, so special copying arrangements will be made with commercial TV for using "real life material" in the classroom. This will require creative adaptation on the teacher's part.

However, some aspects of language learning that are required are not best served by authentic materials and are better served by simplified or more controlled texts. This is often the case for grammar and pronunciation. It is also frequently the case for the presentation of many language functions as well as for non-verbal body communication.

In the preparation of simplified or more controlled texts, the language teacher has outstanding opportunities for creativity in the use of video. It is, of course, an obvious and sometimes superior way to present the linguistic and paralinguistic corpus. With little more than a portable TV camera and a little imagination teachers can prepare teaching modules that apply directly to the needs, wishes and personality of their classes. There is now a new flexibility available to us that should be taken advantage of. In our practicum class at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign many student teachers have chosen to present the linguistic and paralinguistic corpus on video for several reasons. First, it commands the student's attention by diminishing competing stimuli in the environment. For example, simply dimming the classroom lights for viewing helps accomplish this kind of focus. Isolating and "framing" the corpus also helps accomplish this. Second, video has the capacity to repeat endlessly and without alteration the same linguistic and paralinguistic data. This cannot be said for live presentations. How valuable is this capacity for unaltered repetition in language learning? The answer is--very! It is not only behaviorists who value repetition in learning. Cognitive psychologists, too, understand its value, but their approach is more problem-oriented and cyclic. With video it is possible to direct the student's attention to a different aspect of the corpus with each viewing. Something as simple as just removing the sound will help him focus on body language. As with printed texts it is possible to ask him to carefully analyze the video text as to what is present and what is absent. As with printed texts it is possible periodically to recycle the text, perhaps adding to it or presenting a variation of it. Video has many of the same advantages as the printed text, plus a few advantages of its own. Until now only the relative complexity of the technology has inhibited its full exploitation.

It is currently popular in language learning circles to speak of "active viewing" in connection with video use, and we must certainly train our teachers in ways (such as those mentioned above) to accomplish this. However, there is something even more important that we should be making our teachers aware of, and that is the "interactive" possibilities of video in language learning and teaching. Making the language learner a participant in the presentation of the corpus to the class is one of the most interesting and promising developments in this direction. An increasing number of student teachers in my practicum have chosen to prepare their own video lessons. They write and act in their own productions and more importantly they use the student learners as co-actors in the presentation. As an efficient "interactive" technique for beginning level students it is, I think, almost without peer and it cannot be purchased ready-made. It accomplishes a kind of "community language learning" situation in which the students impart as well as learn. It is also a manageable "theatrical enterprise" which provides even the shyest and most limited student an opportunity not only to participate but to shine and to observe himself being competent in the target language. His classmates are spared the tedium of what are often incompetent and ill-prepared role plays. Furthermore, student learners begin to look at each other, even the weakest among them, as "fellow teachers" which of course they are as human beings. It is a splendid example of the machine making the classroom a more humanistic place.

VIDEO AS A TOOL FOR CLASSROOM RESEARCH

During the last 10 years or so the field of ESL methodology has been plagued with a "bandwagon" syndrome. Many techniques and methodologies have been touted as panaceas and cure-alls. These claims have been accompanied by passion, fervor and intense feeling, whether in the name of humanism or science. Either because of this atmosphere or in spite of it, there has been a growing movement in the field toward classroom research and the classroom teacher as a participant-observer in that research. One can only applaud a movement that asks the teacher to be more aware of what is actually happening in the classroom, as opposed to mindless repetition of experimental and statistical claims. It is not that these latter claims are without merit, but they are often abstractions and show limited relationship to what teachers actually experience in the classroom. Teachers must learn to gather their own classroom data, conduct their own classroom experiments and most importantly learn to become their own classroom interpreters. In learning to observe themselves and their students they need another pair of eyes and ears. Anthropology has taught us the value of the tape recorder and the video recorder in the collection of data, and we in the profession of language pedagogy are beginning to understand their value for classroom research. Like movie directors, teachers can now review the day's "rushes" and see what transpired in the classroom--some of which we noticed during class and some of which we didn't--and then turn our attention to an intelligent evaluation of what we saw and heard.

Recently several teachers have used video tapes of our Special English Class for an analysis of classroom discourse. It is, I hope, only a beginning step in training teachers to become their own best researchers and teachers.

CONCLUSION

In our current excitement over the expanding pedagogical prospects of the computer we have tended to overlook some of the very same potential in the older technology of video.

Writing recently in the magazine *Technology Review* on the subject of conversing with computers, Richard A. Bolt (1975:32), a principal research scientist in MIT's Media Laboratory and acting head of its Human-Machine Interface Group, wrote the following:

> Developmental psychologists tell us that one of the first things a child learns is to follow the mother's line of gaze as she speaks about things. For example the child hears the sound "kitty" while following the mother's gaze to that lively, furry creature. Similarly, we can tell where someone's attention is directed by watching the eyes. By contrast, we cannot directly determine "where" a person is listening; people's ears don't angle like a rabbit's do. But interestingly enough, psychologists have found evidence for a link between eye position and auditory attention. We tend to listen in the direction we are looking. This conversational strategy of watching where the other person is looking--as a way of tapping into what that person is paying attention to--can help a computer.

These powerful psychological observations are more directly applicable to video at this point in time than to the computer and should be seized upon to help generate the same kind of enthusiasm and sense of expectation that has been reserved for the newer technology. Our problem now is that we are in danger of undervaluing video and its power because it is available, accessible and even commonplace.

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